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Commission on the Status of Women
Fifty-fifth session
22 February-4 March 2011
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by UNANIMA International, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2011/1.

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Please recycle

Statement*

1. World Bank President Robert Zoellick strongly affirms investing in girls' education and stated that investing in adolescent girls was precisely the catalyst poor countries needed to break intergenerational poverty and to create a better distribution of income; investing in them was not only fair, it was a smart economic move.

2. The Beijing Platform for Action, the Commission on the Status of Women, and the Commission for Social Development have also reaffirmed this. The Commission on the Status of Women has further encouraged and supported girls' education, not only in general, but specifically for training in science and technology. The agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women for 2006 and 2007 emphasized the right of girls to education and highlighted the need to increase their equal and effective access to and use of information and communication technologies, as well as applied technology and urged Governments to enact legislation to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against girls and to monitor compliance.

3. We urge the delegates of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women:

(a) To reaffirm girls' right to education;

(b) To urge the implementation of their full access to education, training, science and technology;

(c) To take further steps to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against them.

Chronic poverty, decent work and girls education

4. A recent report prepared by the Research Centre for the Study of Chronic Poverty at the University of Manchester discusses poverty traps which lead to chronic poverty as experienced across generations. In addition to naming persistent discriminatory family codes as one of the unjust institutions which form barriers for girls in their efforts to achieve their full potential and to secure a form of decent work, the authors point to education as a way out of the poverty trap. However, not just any education will do. It must be a quality education that prepares them in the same way that boys and men are prepared — for decent work and effective political participation in their societies.

5. That such is not the case in many parts of the world is verified in the shadow reports prepared by NGOs for signatories to the CEDAW convention and in the testimony of girl participants at the fifty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women where girls themselves pointed out discriminatory practices that occur within their schools.

6. A young woman speaking at a side event during Commission on the Status of Women 51 said that a friend of hers had been working very hard to do well in school and had told her that the teacher of their main subject had asked her to have sex with him but she had refused. It had been at the time of their exams, there had been more than 70 students and he had put her in last place.

* Issued without formal editing.

7. In a shadow report given to the CEDAW committee in 2009, a researcher reporting on the results of her investigation into discrimination against girls within the school system said that girls had been counselled to go into classes like sewing and hairdressing while the boys had been encouraged to take science, maths and engineering.

8. Unfortunately these are not isolated experiences but are repeated often and in many places in the world, with the result that educational discrimination against girls which they experience in their education becomes an obstacle to their future advancement rather than the release from poverty that education should afford them.

9. The benefits of working in scientific and technological fields have been well established. Women, however, remain underrepresented in these professions and girls are notably absent from the fields of study that lead to employment in these fields and therefore have little access to the wages and decent work which lift them out of situations of poverty and dependence. Instead, throughout the world but particularly in regions where the incidences of poverty are higher and more severe, discriminatory family codes, son bias, physical insecurity, restricted civil liberties, and limited resource rights and entitlements characterize the situation of young women living in situations of poverty.

Results of structural discrimination against girls

10. The discrimination that occurs in the educational setting is found in other areas of the lives of girls living in poverty with the result that cultural preference for sons has resulted in over 100 million missing girls due to female foeticide, infanticide, malnutrition and neglect. Girls are forced into early marriage, increasing their risk of domestic violence and complications in pregnancy which can even lead to death. In addition girls living in situations of poverty, with little or no education, are especially vulnerable to sexual and labour exploitation. Without a good education they have few options open to them for survival. Of the 1.2 million women estimated to be trafficked for sexual exploitation annually, about half of them are children. Some of these girls have been sold by their parents to pay a debt or a bride price for a son. Some have been kidnapped or lured with the promise of a paying job in another city or country.

11. We decry this vulnerability of young women and urge Member States to develop policies and practices in their educational systems which allow for the full development of the potential of approximately half of their populations.

12. We recommend that Member States:

(a) Within a framework of a comprehensive national education strategy, undertake systematic reform of education at all levels designed to promote rights-based gender equality and the right of all girls to quality education. Ensure their safety in travel to and from school as well as in the school and classroom themselves;

(b) Enhance the scientific literacy of girls by removing all barriers to science and technology education in order to empower girls to develop their full potential in whatever field they choose. Provide girls with fellowships, grants and programmes to address current disparities especially in the fields of science and technology;

(c) Create educational environments that support girls' education and training, especially in non-traditional fields such as science and technology. Increasing the number of women teachers and professors, particularly in the areas of science and technology may provide much needed role models for girls contemplating careers in these fields;

(d) Develop and implement a national effort to eliminate discrimination in the public and private spheres based on the notion of girls' inferiority and support positive attitudes and behaviours that encourage girls' full partnership in all areas of life. Such an effort must also utilize the media and change the current socialization of men and boys which has somehow indicated to them that it is acceptable for them to act as demanders for the exploitation of women and girls through prostitution and pornography which fuel human trafficking.

Note: Statement is endorsed by the following non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Council: Coalition against Trafficking in Women, Congregations of Saint Joseph, Grail, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Salesian Mission, Sisters of Charity Federation, Temple of Understanding, and VIVAT International.

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Statement submitted by the International Association of Applied Psychology, International Association of Schools of Social Work, International Council of Psychologists, International Council of Women, International Federation of Women in Legal Careers, International Federation of Women Lawyers, International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, World Council for Psychotherapy, World Federation for Mental Health, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Please recycle

Statement*

1. We are committed to the promotion of mental health, psychological and societal well-being, the prevention and treatment of mental illness and emotional distress, and the improvement in the delivery and quality of mental health services through advocacy and education at the United Nations.

2. The importance of maintaining full mental health for all people is recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) in its constitution. Historically, mental health has been overlooked or minimized in discussions at the United Nations.

3. We agree that allowing girls and women of all ages to access and participate in education and training is essential in providing them with full employment opportunities. It is imperative that we confront the attitudes and mores that perpetuate gender-based educational inequity and seek to remove barriers that prevent girls and women from fully engaging in the workplace and the community.

4. Education and physical and mental health are integrally connected. There are serious psychological consequences if girls and women are prevented from obtaining an education. These consequences are lifelong if women's intellectual growth is stunted. Worldwide, 120 million school-age children are deprived of their right to education, and who may suffer loss of self-esteem among other psychological problems.

5. Education empowers girls and women of all ages to resist violence and assert themselves. Lacking marketable skills, uneducated women cannot obtain decent work, are perceived as an economic burden, and remain vulnerable to violence. Educated women are more likely to reinvest resources in the health and education of their children and participate in political discussions, thereby improving the function of Government and civic institutions. Girls who are literate are more likely to teach their mothers and grandmothers to read and write.

6. Consistent with the release of the United Nations Population Fund report on the State of the World Population 2010 and its publication entitled "*From Conflict and Crisis to Renewal: Generations of Change*", the 2010 WHO report on *mental health and development*, and the goals of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), education is necessary to promote resilience and renewal, and to redefine the roles between boys and girls and men and women to end sexual violence against women and girls in armed conflict and to encourage greater participation by women in peacebuilding initiatives.

7. The World Medical Association declared at its annual assembly in Vancouver, Canada, that violence against women and girls has become a worldwide institutionalized phenomenon and a major public health crisis. Among the consequences of violence and abuse of women and girls are numerous debilitating mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, chronic grief and despair, as well as the long-lasting effects of post-traumatic stress disorder. Uneducated and mentally ill women and girls are doubly stigmatized and isolated. Suicide is the second leading cause of premature death in women.

8. The physical and mental health of mothers and their children benefit greatly when women are educated. Fertility rates and maternal and infant mortality rates are

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lower in societies where educated women have smaller, healthier and better educated families. Educated women insist on education for all of their children, but particularly for their daughters. At the United Nations Department of Public Information 2010 conference on non-governmental organizations, held in Melbourne, Australia, it was noted that at least 340,000 women die each year of pregnancy-related causes, including from the lack of trained health-care professionals during childbirth. Women not only deserve adequately trained health-care providers throughout childbirth, but also are the largest untapped potential to become those educated providers.

9. The World Bank has reported that girls' education is associated with increased income for their families. If there is only a 1 per cent increase in the number of women with a secondary education, annual per capita income grows 0.3 per cent annually. This growth is significant not only for women and their families but also for the global economy. Mental health is an integral component of a comprehensive approach to access of women and girls to employment.

10. The following recommendations are essential for promoting education and mental health and increasing the well-being of girls and women of all ages. We respectfully request the implementation of the following action priorities.

- Women of all ages must have full access to education and training in order to obtain decent employment, and thereby reduce high levels of poverty and disease
- Women and girls of all ages must be educated in order to facilitate their physical, mental and reproductive health and well-being
- Cultural attitudes of both men and women must be changed through education in order to prevent violence against girls and women, to prevent HIV/AIDS and other diseases, to prevent forced early marriages, trafficking and forced prostitution, and to promote gender equity
- The worldwide bias against women in science, mathematics, technology and related fields must be eliminated to facilitate their entry into all spheres of employment opportunities
- Adequate culturally appropriate mental health screening, counselling and ongoing services for women and girls with chronic mental illness must be developed in close collaboration with the communities served
- Adequate funding for training and retraining health workers and teachers, with particular focus on opportunities for women, must be provided to improve the infrastructure of the health and education sectors
- Ongoing quality monitoring and evaluation of existing and new educational programmes and services must be made

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Statement submitted by Actio: Aides aux Familles Démunies, American Association of University Women, Associated Country Women of the World, Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Congregation of our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Dominican Leadership Conference, Foundation ECPAT International, Franciscans International, Girls Learn International, Grail, International Association of Schools of Social Work, International Council of Jewish Women, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of University Women, International Movement for Fraternal Union Among Races and Peoples, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, League of Women Voters of the United States, Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, NGO Health Committee, Pan Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association, Partnership for Global Justice, Passionists International, Perhaps Kids Meeting Kids Can Make A Difference, Plan International Norway, Salesian Mission, Salvation Army, School Sisters of Notre Dame,

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Please recycle

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, Soroptimist International, Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund, World ORT Union, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

Statement*

Promises made to girls

1. In 1995, with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Governments committed themselves to eliminating all forms of discrimination against girls and to increasing their access to education, training, science and technology; they also publicly acknowledged that the advancement of women is not sustainable without attention to the rights of girls. It remains the world's most comprehensive framework for achieving gender equality.

2. The Commission on the Status of Women has also encouraged and supported girls' education and training in science and technology. The 1997 agreed conclusions of the Commission called for renewed importance to be given to mathematics, science and technology education for girls, including the use of information technology. The 2006 agreed conclusions highlighted the need to increase girls' equal and effective access to and use of information and communication technologies, as well as applied technology. The 2007 agreed conclusions reaffirmed girls' right to reach their full potential and specifically enumerated girls' right to education and also urged governments to enact legislation to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against girls and to monitor compliance.

3. The fifty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women offers a unique opportunity for Member States to review progress and ensure that all girls have the full enjoyment of their human rights, especially their right to full access to education, training, science and technology.

Girls' access and participation

4. The benefits of enhancing the inclusion of women in scientific and technological fields have been well established. Women, however, remain underrepresented in these professions and girls are notably absent from the fields of study that lead to such employment. Although there is little discrepancy between the number of girls and boys who study scientific subjects in secondary schools, a significant difference emerges at higher levels of education. In 2007, the median share of female students in science education at the tertiary level was just 41 per cent, and the share of female students in engineering, manufacturing, and construction only 21 per cent. Additionally, female students were severely underrepresented in physics and computing.

5. In explaining such disparities, much of the discussion has focused on the so-called gender achievement gaps and the popular notion that girls lack proficiency in mathematics and science. Research, however, indicates that gender differences are not routinely identified and, in many cases, identified gaps favouring boys tend to be small. Additionally, in some countries, girls have outperformed boys. Related research indicates that high-level accomplishment in science and technology for both males and females is facilitated by exposure and opportunity at the pre-tertiary level. Unfortunately, females are less likely than males to complete high-level rigorous science and mathematics coursework at the secondary level.

* Issued without formal editing.

Institutional access barriers

6. Disparities in access and participation must be explored from a lifespan, developmental perspective that incorporates the various areas of discrimination experienced by girls, including institutional barriers and gender stereotypes. Research indicates that girls begin life from a position of disadvantage that continues throughout their lifespan. Cultural preference for sons has resulted in over 100 million missing girls due to female foeticide, infanticide, malnutrition and neglect. An additional one third of all girls are not registered at birth. Countless numbers of girls are forced into early marriage, ending their education, limiting their freedom, and increasing their risk of domestic violence. Early pregnancy and complications in childbirth result in 70,000 deaths annually. Girls are infected by HIV/AIDS at disproportionately high rates; three quarters of the 15-24 year-olds infected with HIV are young women and girls. Finally, discriminatory cultural practices and inheritance laws condemn many to poverty.

7. In addition to discrimination against girls, violence, economic and sexual exploitation also prevail. Untold millions of girls are engaged in some form of child labour and countless numbers are trafficked as human slaves mainly for commercial sexual exploitation, including sex tourism, prostitution and pornography. It has been estimated that at least 1.8 million children are exploited in commercial sex or pornography worldwide, the vast majority of them being girls.

8. Educational, social, and economic opportunities are also hampered as a consequence of gender roles and their associated obligations, commitments and expectations. Girls undertake much of the domestic labour needed for poor families to survive (e.g., carrying water, harvesting crops, tending livestock, and caring for younger children). Girls also spend more time than boys on domestic chores and other household responsibilities.

9. As a consequence of gender inequities and discriminatory practices, countless numbers of girls are denied their human right to basic literacy and primary education, preventing them from developing the foundations upon which technological and scientific fields are built and essentially closing the door to any future careers in those fields. Empirical research indicates that girls are less likely than boys to be enrolled in school and are more likely to remain illiterate and to drop out of school. Girls still account for a majority of children who are out of school, and although there has been an increase in primary school enrolment, two thirds of countries have not achieved gender parity in secondary education. The situation is even more dire for girls who live in poverty, and members of ethnic or racial minorities.

10. Access to education, training, science and technology is not guaranteed even when girls pass through the schoolhouse door. School curricula often reinforce prevailing gender stereotypes and textbooks often perpetuate gender biases. Other barriers include the quality of the training received by teachers, the nature of the messages transmitted in the classroom where boys are more likely than girls to be rewarded in maths and science classes, and few female role models exist.

11. Gender inequities are also associated with unequal access to basic technologies. Statistics indicate that in most regions of the world, science and technical studies are pursued less often by girls than by boys through all levels of schooling. The conventional wisdom that sex differences in vocational interests

(e.g., men prefer working in hands-on environments while women prefer working with people), play a critical role in gender disparity in scientific and technological fields is challenged by studies that indicate that interest in science and technology is linked to science pedagogy and curricula, teaching strategies and materials. Furthermore, research has shown that effective educational strategies exist to foster the interest and persistence of middle school girls in science and technology.

12. Psychological barriers have also been identified as playing a significant role in explaining gender-based disparities in achievement, as well as women's access to career opportunities. Gender socialization begins at a young age and has been linked with the development of gender-stereotyped behaviours and girls are not generally encouraged to make educational and career choices in the sciences or technology. Furthermore, parental attitudes towards girls' and boys' abilities have been linked with lower rates of science and technology participation.

13. Studies also indicate that gender biases and stereotypes are influenced by parents, school and the media, and reinforced by the peer group. The mass media, for example contributes to perpetuating negative gender stereotypes. Television programmes, advertisements and toys send the message that science and technology are for boys. Finally, negative stereotypes about girls' abilities in mathematics and other gender stereotypes may affect girls' performance, self-assessment and interest in science and mathematics. The prevalence of the gender-science stereotype in a given country has been linked with gender differences in performance in eighth-grade science.

Recommendations

14. The international community is committed to gender equality at all levels of education by 2015. We urge Member States to:

(a) Undertake systematic reform of education at all levels, creating rights-based, gender-sensitive curricula, infrastructure and pedagogy designed to promote equality and the rights of all girls to quality education at all levels.

(b) Enhance the scientific literacy of girls by removing all barriers to science and technology education in order to empower girls to develop their full potential in whatever field they choose. Provide girls with fellowships, grants and programmes to address current disparities especially in the fields of science and technology.

(c) Invest in teacher training. Teachers must be qualified and trained in gender-sensitive teaching methods, so that they have high expectations for both girls and boys and can raise awareness of gender issues among students.

(d) Empower women by increasing the participation of girls in quality education training, science and technology. Emphasizing empowerment will open up a broad range of employment opportunities for women, both as professionals in specialized positions and as technicians in careers.

(e) Create educational environments that support girls' education and training, especially in non-traditional fields such as science and technology. Increasing the number of women teachers and professors, particularly in the areas of science and technology, may provide much needed role models for girls contemplating careers in these fields.

(f) Remove all barriers to education for girls, including school fees, discriminatory attitudes and curricula, and ensure their safety both when travelling to and from school and in the classroom. Education is the right of every girl and the key to transforming her life and the life of her community. Without access to quality education, women will continue to be denied equal access to decent work and full employment in all career fields.

(g) Develop comprehensive national education strategies that include dependable long-term funding that ensures adequate education infrastructure and prioritizes girls' education in all development plans and poverty reduction plans.

(h) Collect, analyse and disseminate data disaggregated by sex, age, socio-economic status, race and ethnicity, in order to create an inclusive gender perspective for planning, implementation and monitoring of Government programmes and for benchmarking across nations and communities.

(i) Launch public campaigns to eliminate discrimination in the public and private spheres based on the notion of girls' inferiority and support positive attitudes and behaviours that encourage girls' full partnership in all areas of life. Such campaigns must utilize the media and address the active role of men and boys by establishing gender equality and emphasizing the societal benefits for all of girls' empowerment.

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Statement submitted by Catholic International Education Office, Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Dominican Leadership Conference, Franciscans International, International Council of Jewish Women, International Federation of Women in Legal Careers, International Federation of Women Lawyers, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice delle Salesiane di Don Bosco, National Council of Women of the United States, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur, Soroptimist International, UNANIMA International, United States Committee for UNIFEM, World Movement of Mothers, World ORT Union, World Youth Alliance, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Please recycle

Statement*

1. We, non-governmental organizations working towards the realization of gender equality, affirm the need to prioritize women's and girls' equal access to education, full employment and decent work.

Access and participation of women and girls

2. As nations try to build and grow their economies in our globalized world, women and girls much too frequently continue to be pushed to the margins of society. Women's access to full employment and decent work requires the implementation of policies that recognize their full potential and human rights throughout their lifespan. From early childhood, girls must be given equal access to all educational opportunities. Formal and informal education programmes must develop and implement curricula that take a proactive approach to rejecting gender stereotypes and promoting the empowerment of women and girls. As gender-based violence negatively affects women and girls in all aspects of their lives, including at home, work and school, ensuring that girls are educated about their rights and can invoke them is imperative. For instance, sexual harassment and violence at school is a significant obstacle for many girls to receive an education, and for those who do succeed, such abuse continues to be a significant problem in the workplace. Eliminating these forms of violence against women and girls is imperative to ensure their meaningful participation in society.

3. Challenging the sexualization of women and girls is also critical to ensure their access to education and employment. Given our increasing reliance on various technologies and the virtual world, aggressive action is needed to ensure that stereotypical, sexualized and violent images of women and girls are eliminated. The pervasiveness of and easy access to pornography, especially on the Internet, fuels harmful stereotypes that women and girls are sexual objects. Men and boys as well as women and girls not only become desensitized to the sexualized violence in pornography and other media, but also view it as normal in their lives. Thus, the sexualized abuse and violence that is normalized in pornography is not only harmful to the women used in the creation of it, but to all members of society, who learn to accept these degrading images. Moreover, the more men accept the sexual and gender-based violence that is a mainstay in pornography, the more likely they are to rationalize buying prostituted sex, thus increasing the demand for sex trafficking, as well as sexually harassing or abusing female classmates or co-workers.

Women's employment and decent work

4. Economic policies must be designed to include the protection of human rights and the promotion of gender equality. When countries rely on exporting women's labour to help infuse wealth into their national economies through migrant workers' remittances back to their home country, they must also take measures to address the risk of trafficking in persons and other forms of exploitation. Moreover, in building up the tourism industry, countries should not prioritize profits over the well-being of women and girls by effectively normalizing and, in some places, even legalizing the sex industry, which leads to sexual violence and exploitation. Often, these policy initiatives are carried out with the explicit encouragement of intergovernmental

* Issued without formal editing.

organizations, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), World Bank, and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). For instance, in 1998, ILO called for the economic recognition of the sex industry and its contribution to a country's gross domestic product. Similarly, UNAIDS has called for the decriminalization and regulation of all aspects of prostitution and related "sexual services", under the misguided guise of HIV/AIDS prevention.

5. The result of economic globalization has been an increase in trafficking for sexual exploitation as well as labour exploitation. Women and girls suffer disproportionately as they make up 80 per cent of trafficking victims worldwide. Rather than removing discriminatory obstacles to women's full employment in decent work as equals to men, they are exploited as cheap labour or sexual objects. Without enforcement of laws against workplace discrimination worldwide and policies of job creation that do not continue to promote negative gender stereotypes, women and girls will remain vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation. Commercial sexual exploitation is based in and reinforces "the historically unequal power relations between men and women that have led to domination over and discrimination against women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women". States and international organizations must also recognize the gender aspects of labour trafficking. Women and girls are more likely to be subjected to physical, psychological and sexual abuse by their employers when they have no legal recourse and no other economic options. States must therefore pass and implement laws protecting victims of trafficking, both domestic and international, who are found within their borders. They must support educational and job training opportunities for women that are not reliant upon traditional cultural practices and beliefs about women's roles.

6. In addition, States must address the proliferation of the global sex industry and the insidious impact of normalized and legalized prostitution on women and girls. Prostitution trains men and boys to view and treat women and girls in every arena of their lives as objects to be purchased and consumed. The resulting beliefs and perceptions are not confined to sex industry victims but are directed against all girls and women, such as wives and girlfriends, female co-workers and employees, and women and girls encountered on the street. The sex industry has expanded its reach to turn sex clubs into facilities for conducting business meetings, entertaining corporate clients or lobbying Government officials. Women are not likely to participate in meetings at which the "entertainment" includes the exploitation of women, and those who do attend are not likely to be accorded respect by male colleagues who are simultaneously viewing women as objects to be bought and sold. The sex industry has thus created a new culture of men-only bonding through the collective abuse of women. This trend presents an obstacle to women's equal opportunities for employment in decent work. Government-sanctioned prostitution thus undercuts the non-exploitative employment available to all women.

Recommendations

7. We urge the implementation of policy and action in the following areas:

- Specific and local recommendations should be made not only about ending particular forms of male violence but also on transforming systemic social and economic structures such as patriarchy and other harmful social systems that unremittingly disadvantage women

- Governments should eliminate structural and patriarchal factors that push women and girls into trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, such as poverty, systematic violence against women and girls, gender discrimination, harmful traditional practices, and other forms of discrimination, such as racism
- Educational curricula should be implemented to promote gender equality in relationships by raising awareness of the harms of gender stereotypes, sexual exploitation and objectification of women and girls
- Services for survivors of international and domestic trafficking and prostitution should be adequately funded and supported, including exit programmes with financial assistance, education and job training, employment opportunities, housing, health services, legal advocacy, residency permits and language training
- Effective laws should be promoted against trafficking, prostitution and related forms of sexual exploitation, including provisions that criminalize the demand for trafficking and prostitution based on principles of gender equality
- Government policies that promote prostitution, whether through legalization or decriminalization of the sex industry, should be rejected
- The misleading term "sex work" should be rejected since it minimizes the abuses and exploitation of prostitution and attempts to redefine it as an ordinary job, particularly for impoverished and marginalized women
- The following conventions should be ratified and implemented: (a) Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others; (b) the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; (c) the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and (d) the Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

8. Governments must not use short-term economic measures, such as permitting and encouraging the proliferation of the sex industry, to address the development and feminization of poverty. The legitimization and normalization of the sex industry has a profoundly negative, immediate and long-term impact on the human rights and dignity of all women and girls. Rather, Governments must adopt and adequately fund programmes aimed at ensuring equal access to education for women and girls and ending employment discrimination based upon gender. In promoting access to technologies such as the Internet, Governments should take steps to combat the negative impact of the media's promotion of violence against women. Adopting short-sighted economic and educational policies that are not protective of dignity and human rights prevents societies from achieving the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

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Statement submitted by Coalition against Trafficking in Women, Company of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Congregations of Saint Joseph, Franciscans International, Grail, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Salesian Missions, Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, Temple of Understanding, UNANIMA International and VIVAT International, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

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Statement*

1. The theme of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women raises complex issues surrounding education, use of technology and employment bringing together promise and deception. On the one hand, if women and girls have access to education, training, science and technology, the promise of full employment and decent work can be fulfilled. On the other hand, when women and girls are denied access to education and training and the tools of science and technology are instead used to exploit them, besides living in poverty, they are deceived, enslaved and exploited.

2. The United Nations has already accepted strong and positive policies to support the implementation of the access related to this session's theme. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) affirms the rights of women in rural areas to appropriate technology. The Beijing Platform for Action speaks of their right to the provision of information, opportunities and assistance. The Commission on the Status of Women has asserted their rights to access to and control over technology. The World Summit on the Information Society speaks of their right to participation in technology. Resolutions in the Economic and Social Council promote the provision of broadband connectivity for low income and poor women, women living in poverty and women entrepreneurs, particularly in rural and remote areas.

3. Certainly two of the technologies that have most affected change in the lives of those who have access to them are the mobile phone and the computer with Internet access. On the positive side, these technologies have enabled producers to track prices in neighbouring markets enabling them to go to the market with the best price for their goods. Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) have expanded the possibility for education and training on a variety of topics in a way which allows access to education that is possible anywhere in the world. On the negative side ICTs have become a tool of exploitation linking sex traffickers and buyers of women and girls for sexual exploitation. They have spread pornographic images of women and girls far wider and with more general distribution than would have been possible prior to the ICT era. These technologies have been used to promote modern slavery resulting in the expansion of trafficking of women and girls.[1] These technologies provide for opportunity or exploitation[2] according to who is using them.

4. While these technologies are becoming more and more widespread the digital divide between those who have access because of their resources and those who do not is becoming wider and wider. Millions of people are missing out on the technological revolution and the majority of these are women and girls. Research by the Cherie Blair Foundation lists five factors that influence women's mobile phone ownership: household income, age, occupation, educational levels and whether they live in an urban area or not.[3]

* Issued without formal editing.

[1] See the work of Gail Dines regarding pornography in the media of today's ICT revolution.

[2] *Because I am a Girl, the State of the World's Girls 2010: Digital and Urban Frontiers — Girls in a Changing Landscape*, p. 101.

[3] Ibid., p. 102.

5. The non-governmental organizations contributing to this statement are present in some of the poorest and most isolated parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Women and girls in these regions struggle continuously with lack of access to information and communication technologies. If ICTs are available, and they frequently are not, their cost is extremely high — beyond the means of the women and girls who live in situations of chronic, or even transitory, poverty. These women and girls lack food security, clean water, education, health care, and constantly face the challenges of maternal mortality, family care and the many daily chores needed to keep the family fed and clothed.

6. For many, technology frees up time for educational and leisure pursuits. However, for these women and girls even simple technology such as energy efficient solar cookers, solar lamps, and agricultural equipment, is out of reach. The poverty traps are further compounded by lack of education and training and female illiteracy.

7. Women and girls living in poverty are held captive to the lack of political will to address the structural changes that can reduce the negative effects of patriarchy, corporate and individual greed fuelled by globalization, and social and cultural practices which discriminate against women and girls.

8. Technology ought to be a way to break out of poverty for women and girls. Instead access to technology is about power and control. In patriarchal societies it is controlled by men. Even in their school days boys are educated to explore and conquer the world while girls are directed into school work that teaches them only how to care for others. They are told that science and technology is for boys while sewing and hair-dressing are for girls.[4]

9. In conclusion, we believe that it is possible for ICT to live up to its promise for women and girls, especially those who live in poverty and in rural areas. We also believe that ICT usage to deceive, abuse and exploit women and girls is not inevitable. We invite all stakeholders, the United Nations, Governments, civil society, corporate business and individuals, to take the steps necessary to fulfil the promise:

- Research and share good practices that have resulted in improved access to ICT technology and the training of school age girls in ICT coupled with an improvement in their quality of life. Scale these up especially for women and girls living in poverty and in rural and remote areas.[5]
- Research the use of modern technologies — particularly the mobile phone and the computer — as tools to enslave women and children and in some cases men in sexual exploitation and forced labour. Look particularly for good practices used by law enforcement, Governments, civil society and other stakeholders to reduce the exploitative aspects with a view to eliminating the demand generated by these tools.
- Study the results of educational modules used to raise awareness of the above practices and also the results of any specific laws or regulations both in the

[4] This point is argued cogently in Plan International quoting "Bridging the gender divide: how technology can advance women economically", ICRW (2010), and "The second digital divide and young women", Cecilia Castaño, Universidad Complutense de Madrid (2008), p. 112.

[5] http://www.invenco.org/?q=sisters-casestudy, Primary school case study.

technology industry and in educational programmes in preventing these abuses. Educators such as the Coalition against Trafficking in Women members in Mexico City and in the Philippines have developed strong and effective programmes which include such education both for women and girls and men and boys.[6]

- Carry out significant research in settings where technology has been used as a force to reduce or eliminate the exploitation of women and girls. Examine laws, regulations and other technologies that can promote the promise of technologies rather than deception and abuse. Through various human rights bodies such as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee on the Rights of the Child promote the dissemination of these practices and encourage corporations in these industries to become involved in their positive use.

[6] See http://catwinternational.org/ for descriptions of these programmes and contact information for those running the programmes.

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Statement submitted by Plan International Norway and Plan Sweden, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2011/1.

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Please recycle

Statement*

1. **Statement calling on Governments: to act on pre-existing commitments to eradicate all forms of violence and discrimination against the girl child; to recognize the link between harmful traditional practices and girls' ability to secure educational opportunities and success; to ensure that gender-based violence in schools remains a top priority on the agenda of the Commission on the Status of Women.**

Accountability for past commitments is critical to achieving progress on eradicating all forms of violence and discrimination against the girl child

2. The fifty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2007 concluded with the Commission urging Governments to take effective and meaningful measures towards ending all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child. Noting a profound concern that "previous goals and targets and commitments, including financial commitments, made with regard to the girl child remain unfulfilled", the Commission highlighted the key role that girls' empowerment plays in breaking the cycle of discrimination and violence and in promoting and protecting the full and effective enjoyment of all their human rights.

3. In particular, the Commission urged States to take strong action to promote girls' education as a powerful transformative tool against poverty and for social development. However, gender-based violence, both in and around schools, continues to present a substantive threat to girls' educational opportunities and life choices, undermining all aspects of their social development, health and well-being.

4. Plan is concerned that in spite of the great advances in the political and legal frameworks protecting the girl child as a young woman and as a child, girls throughout the world are still subjected to discrimination and violence, at school and in the community. In sub-Saharan Africa 12 million girls may never enrol in schools. Although there has been some progress made in advancing gender parity in secondary education, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean, in most of Africa less than a quarter of adolescent girls attend secondary school, while in South and West Asia the proportion is less than half. One of the main reasons for low enrolment and high drop-out rates is violence in schools.

Violence in schools is widespread and multifaceted, requiring increased attention and targeted investment

5. Schools are the very place where girls in difficult circumstances around the world can best find the opportunities for self-empowerment, and opportunities for a safer, happier and more fulfilled life. Yet in these institutions, gender-based violence is preventing girls from achieving their potential which begins a cycle of discrimination and abuse that will endure long after school lessons are over.

* Issued without formal editing.

6. In conjunction with its global *Learn Without Fear* campaign,[1] Plan[2] confirmed that school violence is widespread and multifaceted and sexual abuse and exploitation in schools is a major problem for many students. Girls, in particular, are exposed to a double threat from male teachers *and* students. These findings coincide with those in Plan's annual "State of the World's Girls" reports as part of Plan's global campaign on girl's rights — *Because I am a Girl*.[3] Girls are disproportionately vulnerable to sexual exploitation in and around schools, which includes sexual transactions such as good reports or good marks in exchange for sexual acts *or* sexual relations as payment for school fees *or* supplies. This exploitation can also involve male students "offering" girls to teachers in return for lowered fees.[4]

School-based violence is rooted in other forms of exploitation and violence in the community, including harmful traditional practices

7. Harmful traditional practices, such as initiation rites and child marriage, are a culturally driven breach of girls' right to bodily integrity, survival and development. Such practices not only inflict painful and often irreversible long-term damage or death, but also present serious psychological impacts that have repercussions throughout a child's life cycle. Harmful traditional practices deny girls their right to health and to equal treatment, their right to protection and their right to participate in the decision-making processes which affect their life.

8. A major driver of harmful practices is their ability to maintain and more deeply entrench gender norms. Discriminatory attitudes and culture-driven concepts regarding male and female sexuality and roles support and facilitate ongoing gender-related violence in schools and in the wider community. By accepting and not challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes that promote the subordination of girls, schools often create further harm to both boys and girls.[5]

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[1] The *Learn Without Fear* campaign focuses on 66 Plan working countries and also aims to create global momentum for change that will improve the lives of millions of children beyond Plan's direct reach. Underpinned by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Millennium Development Goals, the campaign has built its impetus created by the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children, published in 2006. It has also built on Plan's expertise in quality education, school improvement and child protection. Visit www.plan-international.org/learnwithoutfear or contact campaigns@plan-international.org for more details.

[2] Plan is one of the oldest and largest international development agencies in the world. It operates in 48 developing countries across Africa, Asia and the Americas and raises funds in 21 countries in Europe, the Americas, East Asia and Oceania.

[3] Reports so far have covered the following themes: The State of the World's Girls (2007), In the Shadow of War (2008), Girls in the Global Economy (2009), Digital and Urban Frontiers: Girls in a Changing Landscape (2010). All are available at the *Because I am a Girl* global website: http://plan-international.org/girls/resources/publications.php.

[4] Definition of sexual exploitation from the draft document by Plan, UNICEF, Save the Children and Action Aid: *Violence in education, children's right to education denied: evidence from west and central Africa*.

[5] Leach, F. (2003). "Learning to be violent: The role of the school in developing adolescent gendered behaviour" *Compare* 33(3). 385-398.

Gender-based violence in schools is still the most common factor of student dropout resulting in severe social and economic consequences

9. Gender-based violence begins with the pervasive social practices and norms that place girls in marginalized, subordinate roles, and consequently harmful and inhibitive situations. These practices and norms are often reinforced and amplified by educational institutions — the very places where girls often hope to find opportunities for empowerment.

10. School-related, gender-based violence has a twofold impact on girls. It increases their risk of educational failure and exposes them to negative health consequences such as physical injury, unwanted pregnancy, pregnancy-related problems, sexually transmitted diseases, or emotional and psychological harm. These issues generate reduced motivation among girl students, weakened grades, non-attendance and an increased number of dropouts.[5]

11. Plan's research has shown that:

- Between **$2.26 billion** and **$11.34 billion** in foregone social benefits are lost to school violence each year in Brazil.
- Between **$1.483 billion** and **$7.418 billion** in foregone social benefits are lost to school violence each year in India.
- Between **$6.482 billion** and **$32.414 billion** in foregone social benefits resulting from early school leaving are lost to school violence each year in the United States of America.

12. Eliminating sexual violence is even more pressing when it comes to HIV and AIDS, because adolescents — particularly adolescent girls — have a higher risk of infection than all other age groups. Adolescent girls are biologically, culturally, economically, physiologically and socially more vulnerable to HIV and AIDS than adolescent boys.[6]

Recommendations

13. A wide range of findings, evidence, best practices and recommendations can be found in Plan's global *Learn Without Fear*[1] and *Because I am a Girl*[3] campaign documentation.

14. Based on these comprehensive campaigns Plan is advocating for adopting a holistic approach to tackling violence against girls in and around schools.

15. **Therefore, we call on Member States to:**

- Develop national strategies to tackle violence against girls in schools.
- Implement gender-sensitive anti-violence regulations to enable systematic reporting of offences.
- Ensure national curricula reflects and promotes human rights standards including, but not limited to, the Convention for Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

[6] USAID's Office of Women in Development. *Equate technical brief: addressing school-related gender-based violence.*

- Require that national education plans include child protection guidelines with special guidance for teachers and staff at schools.
- Federal and national education budgets must earmark funds for addressing violence against girls in schools.
- Ensure child protection commissions have representation from students to guarantee that the voice of children is heard and their opinions taken into consideration.
- Develop coordination mechanisms to link schools with national child protection systems, including child help lines, and introduce mandatory frameworks for reporting on sexual and gender-based violence.
- Increase government and donor investment in hiring, training and promoting female teachers.
- Ensure all legal and judiciary mechanisms work together so that perpetrators of violence against girls and boys including harmful traditional practices are held to account for their actions.
- Invest in national level sex-disaggregated and age-sensitive research on the prevalence and severity of school-based violence and ensure findings from this research inform child protection guidelines in schools.
- Develop systematic data collection on all types of **harmful traditional practices**; especially those that are less known, to better target interventions.

16. Finally, we need to listen to girls' views and ensure that their voices are heard by decision makers. We need to learn from what they have to say. We need to include them in research, in planning and in policies. We need to invest in girls' skills and ensure that they have access to education, the opportunity to make the most of it and the power to protect themselves. We know what girls across the globe can achieve in the face of adversity is truly remarkable. We need to celebrate these achievements and ensure that all girls, wherever they live in the world, have the same chances in life as their brothers.

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Statement submitted by World Young Women's Christian Association, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2011/1.

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Please recycle

Statement*

Invest in education for women and girls: prevent violence and HIV

1. The World YWCA joins the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and other organizations in celebrating and reviewing the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action strategic objective L4 which calls for the elimination of discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training. This objective also resonates with article 10 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which requires that Member States be obliged to eliminate discrimination against women to ensure equal rights between men and women in education, as well as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the commitments in the 2000 Dakar World Education Forum.

2. Recognizing that education, skills development and training are key to women's empowerment, rights and especially to the prevention of violence against women and HIV; the World YWCA calls on the Commission on the Status of Women to:

- Increase investment in education for women and girls, including comprehensive sexuality education, as key to addressing poverty and promoting the social and cultural empowerment of women, particularly in the context of HIV.
- Involve women and girls in policy dialogues on education to create safe and inclusive educational approaches that will empower young women and will create equal learning opportunity and access to technical training and job markets in science and technology.
- Include a rights perspective in education policies to address the gender disparity between women and men and the protection of girls, since education is an enabling right that will give women and girls a voice for claiming their human rights.
- Demand the right to productive employment and access to decent work for young women. This is core to economic growth policies and poverty reduction strategies at national, regional and global levels.
- Promote vocational and non-formal education programmes that reach out-of-school girls in a safe and inclusive environment and include their right to comprehensive sex education and information on HIV.

3. Promoting women's leadership, including equitable representation of women, young women and women living with HIV, at the highest levels of national political, executive, legislative and judicial structures is key to the achievement of the above commitments.

4. The World YWCA has been involved in education and training of women globally since it was founded in 1894. In 1947, it lobbied for the inclusion of women in the reconstruction programme for Japan and, since then, the YWCA movement has played a key role in advocating for equal opportunities for women and girls in education and training as well as family-friendly labour market policies.

* Issued without formal editing.

The World YWCA has actively supported its national associations to provide opportunities for young women to acquire vocational skills that improve their access to labour markets.

5. The World YWCA uses this expertise to contribute to policy dialogues on the critical role of science and technology in economic productivity and the economic empowerment of women. Fifteen years after Beijing, and in recognition of the gender targets in the Education for All goals and MDGs 2 and 3 on universal access to education and the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, various advocacy campaigns and researchers have noted that progress in women's education, which has been strongly influenced by the women's movement's promotion of education as a core strategy for empowering women, has had a significant impact on countries' economic indicators and the overall well-being of households.

6. The World YWCA has also supported programmes and drawn attention to the quality of education that young women are receiving — especially around their sexual and reproductive health that includes dialogue around sexuality. Young women who have access to quality and comprehensive education that addresses their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are more confident and able to make life choices that reduce vulnerability to sexually transmitted infections, especially HIV and unintended or early pregnancies.

7. The right to education is enshrined in article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It is recognized as an entitlement to free primary education, secondary education and equitable access to higher education and skills training for the labour market. Unfortunately, for many women and girls, this right is not guaranteed due to various economic, social and cultural challenges. In many countries the realization of this right is further eroded as a result of discrimination against women. In a recent keynote speech, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights noted that globally one in five girls of primary school age are not in school compared to one in six boys. More than 55 million girls receive no formal schooling and in many developing countries women are 30 per cent less likely to be literate than men. Many girls are forced out of the formal school system because of poverty, distance, unsafe school environment, armed conflict, occupation, patriarchal systems and gender discrimination that limit young women's access to equal opportunities in education. This right to education also includes three components for young women living positively with HIV: the right to information on prevention, treatment and care; the right to access the highest level of educational opportunities to achieve their full potential without discrimination; and the right to full employment and decent work.

8. Young women's unequal access to full employment and decent work is further exacerbated by HIV. Women living with HIV carry a triple burden as HIV-positive women, caring for family members, and working in sectors that discriminate against people living with HIV. There are many cases of young women who have lost their jobs because of discrimination and stigma. Equal opportunity to work in a health environment is especially important for women living with HIV — who irrespective of age should have access to employment opportunities that do not require an HIV test to secure a job.

9. The World YWCA has also been lobbying for women's rights to access full employment and decent work since the early 1950s and was involved in the International Labour Organization (ILO) policy dialogue on labour laws, such as equal pay for equal work. The ILO, in addressing women's access to full employment, also recognized the importance of a work life balance, and in 1981 developed a policy framework for addressing the needs of workers with family responsibility. This flexible tool allows both male and female workers to exercise their right to full employment by providing childcare, maternity and paternity leaves. YWCAs around the world have responded to this need by providing preschools and day care for children, holiday programmes and non-formal programmes for young mothers.

10. Despite this progress, young women's access to full employment and decent work remains limited due to the prevailing culture of occupation segregation based on the caretaker role of women. Most young women are educated, trained and employed in the service sectors: food, tourism, education and health. These sectors have limited social protection and have been severely affected by the global financial crisis through disinvestment from social sectors and reallocated investment in the financial and construction sectors. This has led to higher levels of unemployment among women, negative trends such as causal employment and lack of social protection.

11. Safety and security of all women is crucial to peace and development. There can be no peace if women are not protected from violence and are not aware of their rights. Without education women cannot claim their rights. Many women continue to live in abusive relationships and have limited opportunities in accessing justice and service, because of lack of education, lack of income and exclusion associated with poverty. When women have education, skills and training, they have possibilities to negotiate safe and supportive relationships, and options and choices for their personal safety and well-being.

12. Several recent United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889, show commitment to end women's vulnerability, especially in conflict areas. All women, especially young women, need to know and understand this framework. The State should take conscious steps to ensure that young women are trained as peace mediators with skills in conflict resolution and gender analysis. Moreover, many young women lack the technical skills for negotiating access to reconstruction funds focused on the economic and production sectors, which often replace women's livelihood options. UNDP Administrator Helen Clark, in a side event on Security Council resolution 1325, recently highlighted that often resources coming into conflict and post-conflict countries are targeted at relief and humanitarian sectors, mainly infrastructure and distribution systems, and women are absent from these sectors.

13. It is essential that a critical transformative opportunity is not lost when women are excluded from the discussion on resource allocation for peacebuilding and reconstruction. The discussion must include education and training. Investing in education for women and girls therefore lies at the heart of the empowerment, rights and development agenda.

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Statement submitted by ABANTU for Development, Association of African Women for Research and Development, Collectif Sénégalais des Africaines pour la Promotion de l'Education Relative à l'Environnement, Groupe Pivot: Droits et Citoyenneté des Femmes, International Federation of Women Lawyers, and Servitas Cameroon, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Please recycle

Statement*

We, on behalf of African women organizations:

1. Considering article 26, paragraph 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulating that education is a fundamental right for all,

2. Considering also that United Nations Member States committed themselves to present education for all as Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals,

3. Considering moreover article 18, paragraph 3 of the Protocol to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights requesting all States to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and to protect their rights as stipulated in international declarations and conventions,

4. Noting that article 12 of the Protocol to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights requests that States take all appropriate measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and ensure gender and access equality to education and training,

5. Noting moreover that article 12 of the Protocol strongly encourages African heads of State to promote girls' and women's education at all levels and disciplines and in particular in the fields of science and technology,

6. Appreciating the decision by African heads of State that 2010-2020 will be recognized as the African Women's Decade and the interest in women's and girls' education in the fight against discriminations and disparities in order to ensure a top grade education open to girls and women in Africa,

7. Appreciating also the fact that the declaration of African ministers responsible for gender and women's affairs on the occasion of the launch of the African Women's Decade put the emphasis on the development of national policies and laws in favour of education for all and women's literacy,

8. Satisfied that the recommendations and commitments of the third women's congress and the first congress for youth in science, technology, innovation and entrepreneurship, organized by the Council in Cairo in November 2010, focused on the setting-up of an observatory on women, sciences and technology in Africa and a club for young scientists aimed at promoting young talent, particularly girls,

9. Concerned that, despite existing conventions and legal instruments ratified by most African States and the heads of State solemn declaration on gender equality, discriminations against girls and women are still prevailing in education and particularly in scientific and technical subjects, and in literacy,

10. Observing that, despite efforts made in terms of girls' access to primary education by most African countries, education inherited from the colonizer is unsuited for countries' needs in terms of development and is also dependent on implemented macroeconomic policies,

* Issued without formal editing.

11. Convinced that no nation can develop if education and access to decent work for its population comprising a majority of girls and women is jettisoned,

12. Convinced moreover that the notion of "decent work" can only be understood if the dignity of girls and women is respected, that is to say an image-enhancing and rewarding work suitable to their family capacities and obligations and which provides a salary likely to help them have a decent life and meet their basic needs (food, housing, health, transport, education, etc.) and be materially, morally and culturally comfortable,

13. Convinced lastly that decent work must enable the working woman to combine family life and professional life and to have access to decision-making positions, jobs with responsibilities and command positions,

14. Determined to fight for girls' and women's access to all subjects and standards of education and training that will allow them to fulfil themselves in decent work,

15. Call upon the African Union to:

(a) Accelerate the ratification by all African States of the Protocol to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights to the Rights of Women;

(b) Institutionalize, through the African Union Commission on Sciences and Technology, an observatory on women, sciences and technology in Africa as part of the African Women's Decade;

(c) Create, through the African Union Commission on Sciences and Technology, within the youth pan-African club, a branch for scientists and including girls' participation;

(d) Watch over the effective implementation of laws on decent work;

(e) Put in place a continental radio and television channel and a newspaper to promote women's role in development, in partnership with civil society organizations;

(f) Help countries emerging from conflict situations to establish the fundamentals of sustainable education and strengthen their equality and peace culture machineries;

16. Call upon African States to take all appropriate measures in order to:

(a) Accelerate the implementation of article 12 of the Protocol to the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights to the Rights of Women;

(b) Extend all literacy plans for the benefit of women of all circles and ages;

(c) Develop the implementation of incentive measures to keep girls and women in higher education, such as community teaching and social infrastructures, as well as awarding of research training fellowships;

(d) Watch over the promotion of girls' and women's access to scientific and technical fields in order to reduce selective courses of study;

(e) Optimize scientific resources and endogenous knowledge in the continent's development process;

(f) Put in place community day nursery for children up to 12 months, for women to be at their peak in their professional and training activities;

(g) Change the curricula of African schools, to introduce a radical reform centred on the rebuilding of the cultural identity of male and female students, and linking the school to the community life;

17. Call upon UN-WOMEN to support research and advocacy activities in Africa aimed at:

(a) Putting in place programmes for strengthening women's and girls' participation in education and scientific and technical training;

(b) Reforming scientific and educational institutions to make them open to women and girls;

(c) Promoting gender analysis in the field of sciences and technologies, to ensure the full participation of women and girls;

18. Call upon development partners to support and promote programmes stemming from those recommendations.

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Statement submitted by African Action on AIDS, Associated Country Women of the World, Centre for Women the Earth the Divine, European Union of Women, Hadassah: Women's Zionist Organization of America, International Alliance of Women, International Association of Democratic Lawyers, International Council of Jewish Women, International Council of Women, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, International Federation of Social Workers, National Council of German Women's Organizations, Salvation Army, Servas International, Socialist International Women, Soka Gakkai International, Soroptimist International, Women's Federation for World Peace International, Women's International Zionist Organization, and World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Please recycle

Statement*

1. Numerous United Nations documents and outcome documents of United Nations and other conferences highlight the importance of education, training and access to the full range of available academic and non-academic training, in particular science and technology, including lifelong learning for the development of women and society as a whole.

2. The need for legal provisions regarding the inclusion of women and girls in education and training for science and technology has not been sufficiently met, and their empowerment has not been achieved in spite of all attempts and progress made so far. Women are carrying a heavier burden due to the current financial crisis, because of the fact that reduction of Government debt is usually associated with a tangible reduction of social services and benefits. Economic growth, economic recovery and development are driven by scientific and technological innovations; countries and societies cannot afford to neglect the value of women's and girls' talents in these fields. Advocating decent work for women is a "win-win" strategy for the economy and societies.

3. In the light of this, we:

- Emphasize the importance of implementing measures to facilitate women's and girls' access to high-quality education and training at all levels
- Stress the need for support structures and policies to retain women and girls in education and training
- Call for safe transport to teaching institutions, the availability of separate sanitary facilities for both sexes and affordable, safe child and dependent care provisions
- Underline the importance of guaranteeing women's access to the labour market
- Call for legal measures ensuring the reconciliation of private and working life for women and men
- Stress the importance of counteracting prevailing gender stereotypes by revising curricula and textbooks and adopting non-discriminatory teaching methods and practices, and by carrying out media and educational campaigns in formal and non-formal settings
- Recommend equality impact analyses based on sex-disaggregated data to change the existing gender dynamics in education and employment
- Underline that decent work concerns not only decent working conditions, but also decent pay, and the whole range of so-called "social" occupations that are poorly paid and without the glamour of success stories, yet indispensable for societies
- Strongly recommend promoting and supporting partnerships between Governments, educational institutions, business and industry in order to end educational segregation, avoid the overrepresentation of women in precarious employment, and encourage women and girls to choose careers in science and engineering fields, traditionally viewed as male domains
- Stress the importance of women's participation in shaping innovative policies concerning science and technology.

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Statement submitted by Mulchand and Parpati Thadhani Foundation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.6/2011/1.

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Please recycle

Statement*

1. Established in June 2000 as a family foundation in honour of Mulchand and Parpati Thadhani, parents of the founders, the Mulchand and Parpati Thadhani Foundation has completed 10 years. Its geographic focus is the Indian subcontinent and its development approach is human rights-based. The mission and objectives are to support socio-economic empowerment of people who are disadvantaged due to gender biases, discrimination, poverty and capacity deprivation (lack of ability to meet basic human needs), lack of education and inability to access health-care services.

2. The Foundation, with its geographic work focus on the Indian subcontinent, especially targets poor, marginalized and disabled women and girls for their empowerment, in order to help them to achieve access and participation in all activities related to education, vocational training and health services, and to promote equal access to sources of livelihood and income generation through the formation of self-help groups and cooperatives, with equitable opportunities to achieve decent paid employment.

3. To achieve the stated mission, the Foundation provides grants, training, consultancy and microcredit to facilitate socio-educational and economic empowerment. This includes focusing on issues related to discrimination and violence against girls and women. To date, 14 such development projects have been supported, including one in Bangladesh. All projects related to disabilities, health, education and economic empowerment have had a special and required focus on gender empowerment and equality in accessing services.

4. The Foundation has developed five training modules carried out in India. Three of the training modules are relevant to and clearly focus on issues related to the theme of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

- The module on human rights education and learning focuses on a conceptual understanding based on international instruments and national background, and focuses on the development process of marginalized people, by poverty/capacity deprivation, health/disability and gender biases in the Indian subcontinent. The 2-3 day module is interactive and includes problem-solving groups/exercises.

- The module on empowering women, human rights and gender equality within a universal and Indian context focuses on a conceptual understanding based on international instruments (e.g., the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Beijing Platform for Action) and the Indian background. The objective of this 2-3 day training module is to provide tools for overcoming obstacles to achieving gender equality and improving the lives of girls, women and their families.

- The 2-3 day module on the Millennium Development Goals, the Indian subcontinent and poverty focuses on a conceptualization of the Goals. The objective is for stakeholders to develop an understanding of all of the Goals and related targets, and conceptualize, integrate, advocate and influence the targets that feed into the larger development agenda in India through public

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policy forums. The vision is that all eight Goals must be looked at in an integrated fashion by Governments, and that the general public must learn about the Goals and strategies to achieve them. We also focus on the concept of a "millennium village" as a framework for our work.

- The other two training modules, relating to psychosocial rehabilitation of the mentally ill and program planning and proposal writing, have special dimensions on the rehabilitation of women with psychiatric disabilities and an inclusive project design to integrate the needs of women and girls.

5. The Foundation works with international non-governmental organizations, United Nations entities and other development partners, to network, collaborate, advocate and participate in forums, meetings and conferences throughout India and other parts of the world. Since its creation in 2000, the Foundation has moved from the "learning" mode to the "doing" mode.

6. The approach of the Foundation is human rights-based and focused on the overarching framework of the Goals. It has utilized different conceptual ideas to initiate new initiatives in its development work, such as the microfinance programme, the "Thadhani fellow" programme, the "tools for organization self-assessment" programme and the concept of the "millennium village", with a constant focus on gender empowerment, equality and equity.

7. Since the launch of the microfinance programme, all of our projects work with girls and women to enhance their capacities and abilities to engage in income generation activities. Two of our rural projects have promoted poor Dalit women's capacities to supplement family income through a milk dairy cooperative and goat-raising project for the sale of goats for consumption purposes. The two other projects focus on urban income generation activities for slum women and adolescent girls. Special mention should be made of our project since 2005 to create girls club centres in partnership with the non-governmental organization TRINITA. This project supports and provides training to 300 young girls, incorporating educational, social and economic empowerment. It also trains them in skills related to confidence-building and assertiveness, and learning practical approaches to deal with violence and violations of their rights in any setting. In addition, the girls receive computer training classes. The partnership between the Foundation and TRINITA has resulted in a group of girls receiving training (provided by the Foundation) to create small quilting products. In December 2010, the non-governmental organization will inaugurate a production unit (quilting cooperative), which will be further expanded to provide quilting skills to additional girls. Technical assistance and quality assurance-related services will be provided by a fair trade organization in Calcutta, making it easier to market the products. In keeping with the 2011 priority theme of the Commission on the Status of Women, the TRINITA quilting cooperative production unit incorporates all of the issues stated above.

8. However, the vocational training is not just limited to the development of a quilting cooperative. The participants in the girls club centres have learned tailoring and how to make soft toys, ladies' purses, jewellery and beauty products. They have also participated in an exhibition of their products.

9. Additionally, the review theme of the Commission is very relevant to the project and its objectives. On a daily basis, the girls learn not only about their

human rights but also about strategies to fight against all kinds of discrimination and physical, mental and sexual abuse.

10. The other urban microcredit programme works with poor women through self-help groups, and provides loans to engage in urban activities to supplement their incomes.

11. The Foundation will continue to focus on serious issues related to the rights and equal opportunities of girls and women, and their access to processes of empowerment, with a very special focus on right to livelihood and income generation activities in rural and urban areas within the Indian subcontinent.

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Statement submitted by the Third World Academy of Sciences, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Please recycle

Statement*

1. In collaboration with the Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSDW), formerly the Third World Organization for Women in Science (TWOWS), Third World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) calls for policy and programmes to address the current global situation which sees countries deprived of the contributions that women can make to science, technology and innovation for development. While women make up 40 per cent of the workforce overall, they are represented in most scientific and technological areas of activity at much lower rates.[1] To reduce the divide between developed and developing countries, to ensure that science, technology and innovation benefit both women and men, and to increase economic growth and sustainable development, all countries need to increase the representation and creativity of women in science and technology.

2. Responsible for 60-90 per cent of food production and processing in the developing world, women and girls are also collectors of household fuel and water, and carers of the sick and elderly. With lower access to resources such as credit, education, land and information, women's agriculture and livelihood activities are underserved and under-supported. At the same time, countries are facing challenges of environmental stress, health and well-being, energy and water availability, food security, climate change, conflict and many others. Women and men experience these in different ways and use different strategies to address them.

3. Science and technology have much to offer in addressing these challenges. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), target a range of goals which can only be achieved if science, technology and innovation are utilized in the development of products and processes. The goals relating to food security, poverty reduction, maternal and child health and HIV/AIDS in particular are only achievable with science and technology strategies which take into account the situations, needs and concerns of women and men. Additionally, ensuring that gender equality and the empowerment of women are central to the development and implementation of successful science and technology strategies will contribute to achieving the targets for all the Goals.

4. At the same time, there is a need to encourage the greater participation of women in science and technology so that countries can benefit from the increased diversity and creativity this will bring. Governments are increasingly recognizing that science and technology programmes that include a significant role for women can have a strong impact on economic growth. To achieve this, we need science and technology for women and women's needs; we also need women in science and technology.

5. In its review of key issues relating to women's representation in science and technology, the TWAS Taskforce on Gender, Science and Technology for the Developing World summarized the problems facing women in science and technology in the developing world:

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* Issued without formal editing.

[1] Although in many regions the participation of women in the bio and life sciences has increased and is at par with men, participation in other sectors of science, engineering and technology remains low, generally below 30 per cent.

- Underrepresentation in scientific decision-making and policymaking bodies in science, technology and engineering.
- "Glass-ceiling" phenomena: women tend to be blocked from advancing to the highest levels.
- Tendency of girls to take bio sciences and education, seen as traditionally "appropriate" areas for females.
- Underrepresentation in basic sciences such as mathematics and physics.
- Gender bias in textbooks, scientific vocabulary and the scientific literature.
- A culture of science that was defined by men to fit the male life situation.
- A perception that science and technology fields are a masculine domain.
- Discrimination, implicit bias against and barriers to women's participation in science and technology.
- Poor science education at the primary and secondary levels.
- Occupational segregation, both vertical (by level of advancement), and horizontal (by sector).

6. Challenges concerning the use of science and technology to support women's development activities include development of simple and low-cost technologies; recognition of women's local and innovative knowledge; refining and improving their production; and support of sustainable livelihoods.

Recommendations

7. *In addressing these points of attrition, partnerships need to be developed with a range of stakeholders*:

- communities and families to support their understanding of the importance of educating both girls and boys in science and technology.
- educationalists to promote understanding of gendered trends in learning, teacher-student interaction and curricula development.
- universities and research institutes.
- the private sector.
- science and technology decision-making bodies.
- small-scale food producers and enterprises to provide support systems and access to technology and resources.
- extension agencies, researchers, civil society and the private sector to develop partnerships for innovative technology development.

8. *Strategies for action should*:

- Ensure that family and domestic obligations don't prohibit women from participating fully in science and technology systems.
- Recognize that women's career patterns tend to be characterized by breaks and re-entries.

- Address gendered misconceptions and stereotypes of faculty and students.
- Recognize the need to support female participation in science education at all levels.
- Help women scientists to develop professional and personal career-building strategies.
- Address social preconceptions and messages about the abilities and obligations of women and girls.
- Support women scientists to work with women and men at the grass roots in agriculture, health, natural resources management and livelihoods development.
- Implement public-private partnerships to support livelihoods and small and medium enterprises based on science and technology or benefiting from science and technology support.

Specific recommendations

9. Actions for Governments development agencies, educational institutions and the private sector:

- The use of science and technology is aided by high literacy and education levels. Governments, development agencies and educational institutions should encourage and enable women and girls in science and technology education at every level to support their role as users and innovators of technologies as well as researchers, scientists and technologists.
- Target and support the education and careers of girls and women in science at all levels, through:
    - Scholarship support for women at bachelor's and PhD and post-doc levels.
    - Extracurricular and community activities to promote interest in science and technology of girls and boys.
    - Universities, government and the private sector should provide support for childcare, either in the form of financial subsidies or on-site day-care facilities.
    - Governments should support South-South and North-South research exchanges and lectureship programmes between women scientists.
    - Grants and fellowships to support women scientists in re-entry, reintegration, re-training and continuing their research while taking family leave.
    - Provide professional support, advancement and leadership programmes for women scientists, including support for mentoring programmes.
    - Ensure the safety and security of women and girls who travel for educational or field research purposes.
- Support science and technology-based and science and technology-supported enterprises for women, through:

- Entrepreneurial training and support for women scientists and technologists including access to capital, advice, business management resources, etc.
- Political and institutional structures as well as political will to support appropriate innovation systems and women's enterprises, including access to business and technology advice, government services, credit, day-care and other complementary services.
- Provide resources for women's science and technology-based enterprises at small, medium and large levels; and science and technology support for women's non-technology-based enterprises.

- Establish or work with existing national level committees and working groups to understand the situation of women in national science, technology and innovation and to develop policy and programming to encourage increased participation, on the model of the South Africa SET4Women initiative (science, engineering and technology) and the India Women in Science Taskforce.
- Collect systematic and longitudinal sex-disaggregated data on participation in all sectors of science, technology and innovation systems.
- Work with a range of technologies and strategies, scaled at different levels, to address local and national challenges in on-farm productivity improvements; soil and water management; and increase value addition to bioresources by:
  - Building the capacity of women to harness and adopt these technologies.
  - Establishing resource centres in rural areas and disseminating information using **Information and communication technologies**.
  - Promoting partnerships between women scientists and technologists and women in rural areas
  - Promoting collective initiatives through women's organizations, networks and cooperatives.
- Policies and programmes to support gender equality in all levels of science, technology and innovation development and implementation should include ongoing monitoring and evaluation, including sex-disaggregated data and indicators. These approaches can include benchmarking and lessons learned in relation to success stories in other countries and regions.
- Establish an inventory on approaches, successes and lessons learned on strategies and models for action in all of these areas.

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Statement submitted by Carmelite NGO, Gray Panthers, Human Lactation Center, International Council of Psychologists, International Peace Research Association, International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, International Public Policy Institute, League of Women Voters of the United States, Maryknoll Sisters of St. Dominic, Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, Solar Cookers International, Grail, UNANIMA International, World Christian Life Community, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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Please recycle

Statement*

1. Climate change is now recognized as the crisis of the twenty-first century affecting not only the lives of the present generation but reaching into the future to dramatically change the environmental space of generations to come. A cross-cutting reality, climate change obstructs the achievement of sustainable development, exacerbates poverty and forces affected populations to migrate in increasing numbers. Together with varied socio-economic factors, it triggers civil conflict and the violence against women that comes in its wake.

2. While everyone will suffer the consequences of climate change, regardless of race, caste, ethnicity, sex, and level of income, when climate change strikes, women of all ages are in the frontlines — women and girls, in rural and urban areas, in the global South and the global North will be the first to suffer its consequences.

3. Indeed, climate change presents a severe and disproportionate threat to the dignity, livelihood, and, in some cases, even the very survival of women and girls, undermining their basic rights in direct violation of human rights law, for example, their:

- Right to survival, security and health (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 3).
- Right to sources of livelihood — food, water, energy, shelter, economic security (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, article 25).
- Right to participation — decision-making opportunities and information (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, articles 21 and 27).
- Right to capacity-building — education and income generation opportunities (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, articles 23 and 26).

4. However, in the face of these threats, women remain resilient. They are central to a community's response to the consequences posed by climate change — as practical problem solvers and nurturing caregivers, responsible leaders and effective policy advocates.

5. Leaders in all sectors of society should recognize the above facts. Women should be taken on as equal partners in a country's efforts to respond to the climate crisis, and to that end, ensured of equal access and participation in education, training, science and technology, including full employment and decent work.

Recommendations

Planning

- Women leaders should be equally represented in planning for the mitigation of the slow and rapid onset of climate change.
- They need to participate at all levels of decision-making about plans for adapting to its consequences, including National Adaptation Plans for Action (NAPAs).

* Issued without formal editing.

Finance

- In allocating funds for climate change projects, special consideration should be given to small scale programmes managed by women that aim for social and ecological benefits over the long term.
- Capacity-building needed to access available financial resources should be provided to women managing small businesses and agricultural enterprises.

Education

- Funding for the education of women and girls should ensure that they receive training in science, math and finance.
- Women should be given equal access to training for policy positions.

Information dissemination

- Planning should be undertaken and resources set aside to ensure that women are included in a community's climate change information network.
- Specifically, they should have access to information about planning and the financial and technological resources available for disaster prevention, mitigation and adaptation to the consequences of climate change.

6. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has stated that all stakeholders should ensure that climate change and disaster risk reduction measures are gender responsive, sensitive to indigenous knowledge systems and respect human rights. Women's right to participate at all levels of decision-making must be guaranteed in climate change policies and programmes.

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Statement submitted by ActionAid, Italian Association for Women in Development, Católicas Por el Derecho a Decidir, Center for Health and Gender Equity, German Foundation for World Population, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, Equidad de Género: Ciudadania, Trabajo y Familia, Family Care International, Federation for Women and Family Planning, Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer, Interact Worldwide, International Planned Parenthood Federation (Europe region), International Planned Parenthood Federation (Western Hemisphere region), IPAS, Marie Stopes International, Pathfinder International, Program for Appropriate Technology in Health, Swedish Association for Sexuality Education, Vaestoliitto — Family Federation of Finland and World Population Foundation, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

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Please recycle

Statement*

1. Millions of women and adolescent girls worldwide face an abysmal sexual and reproductive health situation that threatens their ability to pursue a quality education, gain meaningful employment, enjoy their rights, and participate fully in society. According to the World Health Organization, HIV/AIDS is a leading cause of death and disease in women of reproductive age. Some 215 million women in developing countries who wish to delay or space their pregnancies do not have access to modern contraceptives. An estimated 358,000 women die each year from complications associated with pregnancy and childbirth, with unsafe abortion accounting for 13 per cent of maternal deaths because discriminatory abortion laws restrict access to safe services. Unfortunately, it is women and girls from the poorest countries who are hardest hit by, and least equipped to deal with, HIV and AIDS and lack of access to voluntary family planning, maternal health services, and safe abortion care.

2. One essential yet largely overlooked tool in this struggle to realize women's health and rights is the female condom.

3. Female condoms are the only currently available, effective protection method that prevents both HIV/STIs and pregnancy and is designed for women to initiate. Female condoms are well-liked by women and men from diverse backgrounds. When used consistently and correctly, they are just as efficacious as male condoms in preventing HIV/STIs and pregnancy. Many women deeply value the female condom for giving women a measure of power to take charge of their own protection. For example, women are able to insert the female condom several hours prior to sexual intercourse or to use the female condom as a point of negotiation for safe sex when male partners refuse or avoid using a male condom. Female condoms are also particularly important for women living with HIV, as they provide a female-initiated option to pursue safe sex and prevent HIV transmission, reinfection, or superinfection.

4. When women and girls have the ability to prevent unwanted pregnancies and space their children, they have greater opportunity to finish school, seek employment, and better manage scarce financial and environmental resources. When women and girls are free of sexually transmitted infections or debilitating pregnancy-related conditions like obstetric fistula, they are more able-bodied to perform at work or school and to carry out household responsibilities. But most importantly, when women and adolescent girls have prevention methods like the female condom readily accessible, they have a tool they can use to ultimately help save their own lives.

5. Given the far-reaching impact of HIV, STIs, and unintended pregnancy on women, it is imperative — from a public health, human rights, and moral standpoint — to ensure women have meaningful access to prevention options specifically designed for their use. Despite this urgency, female condoms remain underfunded, largely inaccessible, and underused because of a lack of political will and effective programming. For example, only one female condom was distributed for every 36 women worldwide in 2009. It is a scandal that women — who are at heightened risk of HIV infection for biological, social, political, and structural

* Issued without formal editing.

reasons are often least served by prevention because donors have not prioritized making woman-initiated and controlled options widely available.

6. We urge world leaders to prioritize female condoms in the commitments they have made to achieving universal access to reproductive health (Millennium Development Goal 5b) and universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, and care (United Nations General Assembly Special Session 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS). Indeed, female condoms are a critical component in fulfilling the objectives of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Development Goals, and the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. We urge Governments and donors to take the following action steps:

(a) Expand access to female condoms by dramatically increasing funding for their purchase, supply management, distribution, and programme support. Redouble efforts to alleviate high per-unit costs to consumers, such as engaging in bulk purchase agreements and investing in research and development of additional types of female condoms;

(b) Ensure comprehensive, gender-sensitive, rights-based programming to facilitate female condom uptake and sustained use;

(c) Involve civil society, especially women's groups and women living with HIV, in female condom policy and programme decision-making, implementation, and monitoring.

7. Female condoms are essential in stemming new HIV infections and promoting good sexual and reproductive health. They are a key tool in allowing women and adolescent girls to exercise more control over their sexual lives and to pursue education, employment, and other meaningful livelihoods. We must act now to ensure that women and adolescent girls have access to female condoms and education on their use in order to protect themselves and lead healthy and productive lives.